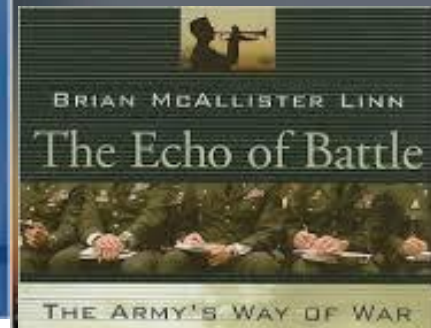
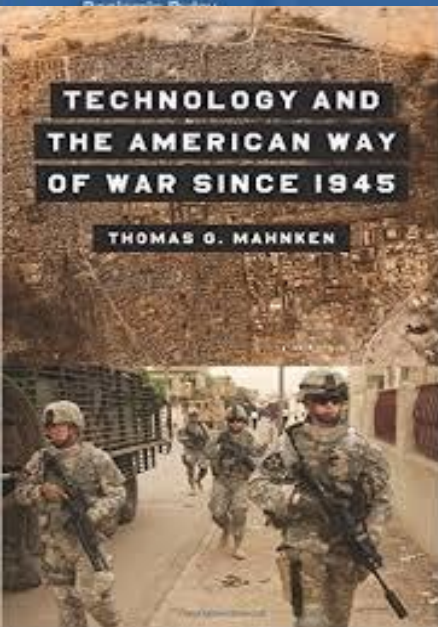
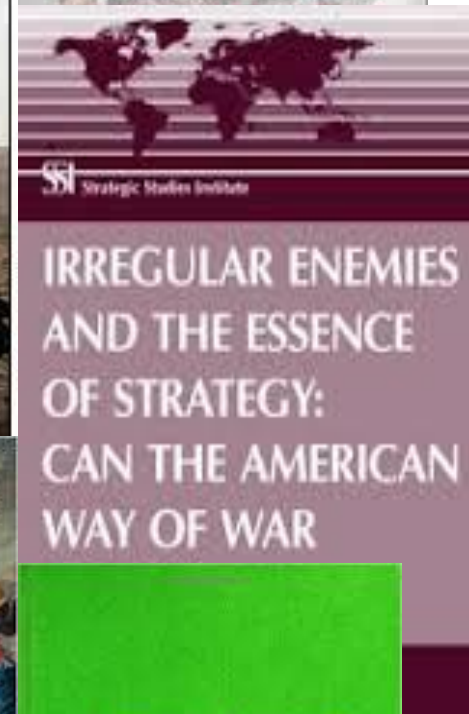
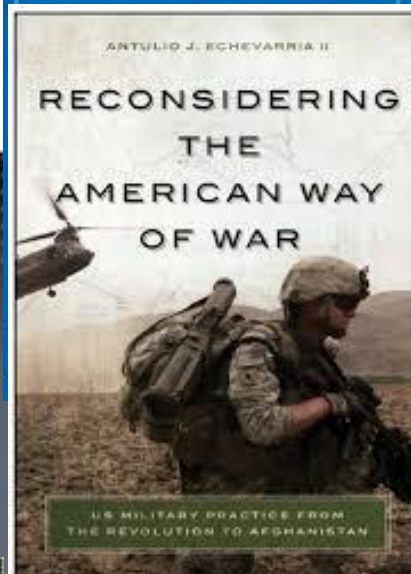
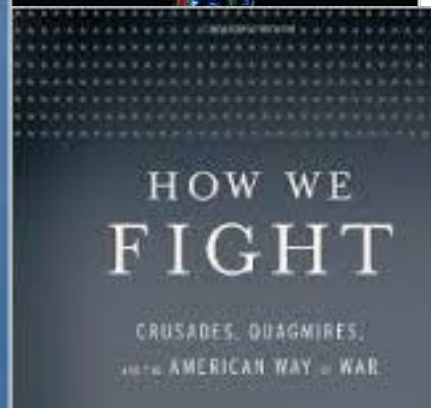
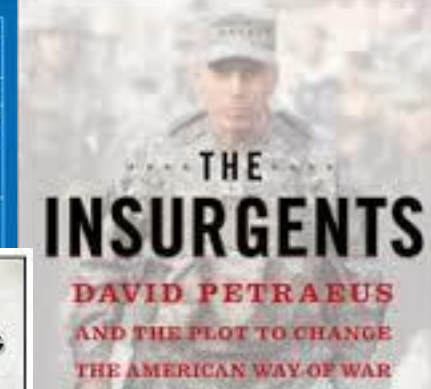
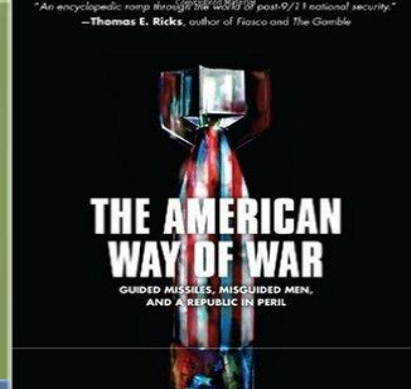
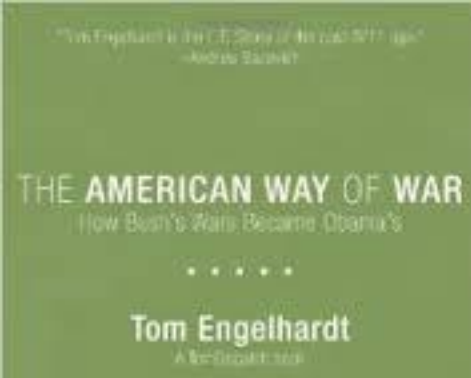


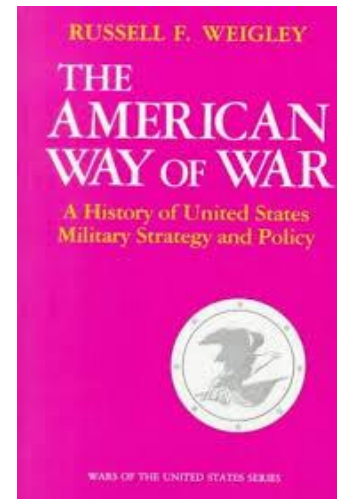
The Evolving American Way of War: From Historical Interpretation to ???

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2015 ISMS Conference
Helsinki, Finland



Historical Interpretation

- Weigley, The American Way of War (1973)
- Way of war as the conduct of operations
- AWW shift from attrition to annihilation (Civil War)
 - US military leaders addicted to annihilation, way of war characterized by firepower, technology, lack of flexibility
 - Critique of Vietnam



Historical Critiques

- Ignores smaller wars, pacification campaigns that did not fit the attrition-annihilation model
- Is a way of war only determined by practice?
 - Political/civilian influence on strategy, manpower, popular support affects conduct of war
 - Armed forces' intellectual preparation for war in peacetime affects how they will wage it

From Historical Debate to Current Military Policy Debate: The New American Way of War (c. 1995)

✿ Revolution in Military Affairs

- ✿ Network Centric Warfare, Effects Based Operations, Full Spectrum Operations, *Joint Vision 2010* (1998)
- ✿ “Admiral Cebrowski’s vision of Network Centric Warfare was a fundamentally *American* way of war, one that promised not just better wars, and not just shorter wars, but perhaps an end to war itself. . . . I wanted to see it used to short-circuit wars and warfare in general. I want wars to be obsolete because America become so powerful that no one is willing to take it on, and thus America is willing to take on anyone.”

New American Way of War

- “The American Way of War refers to the grinding strategy of attrition that U.S. generals have traditionally employed . . . But that was then. Spurred by dramatic advances in information technology, the new American Way of War relies on speed, maneuver, flexibility, and surprise . . . the victory in Iraq shows the military is . . . making the American way of war both more effective and more humane”—Max Boot (2003)

The current debate: The American Way of War interpreted as

- Manifestation/critique of US culture
- Traditional national security policy
- Methods of waging war by US armed forces
- “Strategic culture” of
 - Policymakers
 - military leaders
 - Armed forces or military services
- Policy prescription for the future
- Concept or vision of war

Lessons Learned?

- Writing on the American Way of War tends to be
 - Shaped by immediate events
 - Based on an ideal, simplified historical past
 - History provides justification for existing concepts, not a means of discovering new ones
- Studying how the USA fights is insufficient to learn about how the US military will interpret the 'lessons' for present and future military policies
 - In case of Iraq-Afghanistan, the US armed forces' view is that they 'did their job' and it was the politicians who turned a victorious campaign into an occupation/nation-building
- Prediction: The post-Iraq/Afghanistan 'way of war' will look very much like the pre-Iraq/Afghanistan Way of war